



**USAID | MACEDONIA**  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[September, 20 2007]

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## PRESS RELEASE

### “With pride from Macedonia”: Seal of Quality standards, EU harmonized

Consumers in Macedonia today can enjoy with confidence 99 meat and dairy products awarded the Seal of Quality standard for meat, poultry and dairy products. These standards, earned by 20 Macedonian meat and dairy companies, are fully harmonized with EU food safety regulations. This is only one of the achievements of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Seal of Quality and Agribusiness Assistance in Macedonia Project.

During the last four years, the project created over 400 new jobs, helped to increase exports of fruits and vegetables by \$17 million, facilitated over \$30 million investment in equipment by 1,600 client agribusiness firms, obtained food quality control standards (BRC, HACCP, ISO and EurepGAP) for 17 firms, and established the first accredited independent food quality control laboratory.

“The Seal of Quality and Agribusiness Assistance program was designed to increase incomes and employment in the agribusiness sector in Macedonia,” said Patricia Rader, USAID Mission Director. “To achieve this we enabled meat, dairy, fruit and vegetable producers, processors and retailers to identify and profitably meet market needs by enhancing quality and production efficiency, pursuing joint marketing activities, and adding increased value to their products,” explained Ana Damovska, Project Chief of Party.

The completion of the project celebrated today, marks the beginning of the next phase of this sustainable project. The National Meat and Dairy Association and the Quality Control Laboratory will continue the Seal of Quality legacy. The project spin-off organizations, including the regional East and West Sheep Breeders Associations, the Quality Control Lab and the Integrated Quality Systems will continue the critical work to ensure the quality of food processing and food products.

#### NOTES TO THE EDITORS

The American people, through USAID, have invested more than \$450 million in Macedonia since 1993. Over 25 projects worth more than \$25 million a year are currently being implemented. These projects are designed to support Macedonia's transition to a free market-based, multi-ethnic democracy. They include initiatives to accelerate economic growth, develop democratic institutions, and educate citizens for a modern economy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>